



NEWS

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SADC Increases Grants to Farmers for Soil and Water Conservation Projects

The State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) will pay up to 75 percent of the costs for eligible soil and water conservation projects on farms in permanent or eight-year preservation programs – a substantial increase intended to encourage more landowners to undertake these projects, Agriculture Secretary Charles M. Kuperus announced today.

“Conserving the soil and water resources that sustain agriculture, and all of New Jersey, is an important part of our efforts to retain and strengthen our farms,” said Secretary Kuperus, who chairs the SADC. “By offering greater financial assistance to our farmers, we can help them maintain the productivity of their land and protect the natural resources key to maintaining and enhancing our environment. Additionally, this will serve as yet another incentive for landowners to seriously consider enrolling their farms in one of our many farmland preservation programs.”

The SADC last month adopted rule amendments to enable it to provide up to 75 percent cost-sharing grants and also increase maximum grant eligibility to up to \$75,000 per landowner. Prior to that, the SADC had provided cost-sharing grants of up to 50 percent, with a maximum grant eligibility of \$50,000 per landowner.

Landowners are eligible to apply for grants if their farms are permanently preserved or enrolled in an eight-year preservation program. Under an eight-year program, landowners agree to voluntarily restrict nonagricultural development for a period of eight years. They are not paid for this agreement but become eligible for certain benefits, including soil and water conservation grants.

Soil and water conservation projects include those designed to control and prevent soil erosion and sediment damages; control pollution on farmland; impound, store and manage water for agricultural purposes, or improve management of land and soils to achieve maximum agricultural productivity.

Examples of eligible projects include terrace systems; diversions; stream protection; water impoundment reservoirs; irrigation systems; sediment retention, erosion or water control systems; drainage systems; animal waste control facilities; agri-chemical handling facilities, and land shaping or grading.

Farmers apply for these grants to their local Soil Conservation Districts, which review applications and provide landowners with technical assistance. Applications are forwarded to the State Soil Conservation Committee, which recommends projects to the SADC for funding approvals.

The SADC administers New Jersey’s Farmland Preservation Program and promotes innovative approaches to maintaining the viability of agriculture.

For more information on soil and water conservation grants, farmers should contact the SADC at (609) 984-2504 or their local Soil Conservation District.